# SECTION OF WALL AT DOCTOR WOOD, SOUTH-WEST OF KISDON, MUKER, NORTH YORKSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY



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#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In March 2013, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by Christine Clarkson of M M and C L Whitehead to undertake an archaeological survey of a c.140m long section of drystone field wall near Doctor Wood, to the south-west of Kisdon near Muker in Swaledale, North Yorkshire (NGR SD 90085 98338 centred). The work was required by Natural England as part of a Higher Land Stewardship scheme in advance of repairs to the wall.

The section of surveyed wall displays a typical range of features and characteristics (differential construction, blocked openings, a probable sheep creep, minor realignments, gateways etc) that would be expected in a boundary forming part of a complex historic and archaeological landscape that has developed over a considerable period of time. A comparison between the historic and current mapping, as well as wider sections or buttresses at the base of parts of the wall, shows that the boundary has experienced some minor variation in alignment, probably as a result of rebuilding, particularly the east-west section which retains the ground to the north. The different sizes of stones used in the wall, with much smaller stones at the top compared to those at the base, provide evidence for continued rebuilding and maintenance. A gateway towards the centre of the east side has clearly been inserted, and new well-constructed robust 'wall-ends' have been created. A sheep creep to the south of this gateway may also have been inserted.

The pasture field which is defined by the surveyed section of wall is named as 'Doctor Wood' on the historic and current maps, and it presumably represents a cleared area of former woodland or wood pasture, the remains of which still lie to the west. A probable late 18th-early 19th century field barn lies in the north-west corner of the field, and is associated with a recess built into the adjacent wall. The overall character of the wall, with the absence of 'throughstones', an inconsistent build and a meandering rather than straight alignment, would suggest construction in the 18th century or even earlier, but detailed documentary research would be needed to confirm this.

The survey has shown that a number of sections of the wall have either collapsed, or are in danger of collapse, particularly around a large ancient rowan tree to the east of the field barn. The wall is in need of some limited repair and maintenance, which would simply be a continuation of a long history of such action. Wherever possible, however, any future repairs should ensure that the general character and appearance of the wall is maintained, and that any identified wall furniture is not altered or removed by this work.

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In March 2013, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by Christine Clarkson of M M and C L Whitehead to undertake an archaeological survey of a c.140m long section of drystone field wall near Doctor Wood, to the south-west of Kisdon near Muker in Swaledale, North Yorkshire (NGR SD 90085 98338 centred). The work was required by Natural England as part of a Higher Land Stewardship scheme in advance of repairs to the wall. The scope of the work was not defined by a formal project design but was determined following discussions between the client and EDAS.

#### 2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The section of wall subject to the survey is located in an elevated position, at c.330m AOD, within a landscape of irregularly shaped enclosed pasture fields on the north slope of Swaledale, to the north-east of Muker (see figures 1 and 2). At the time of the survey, the wall was one of the boundaries of a pasture field which formed part of the holding owned by M M and C L Whitehead. There is no official public access to the field in question, although the Pennine Way long distance footpath passes very close to the west end of the surveyed section of wall.
- 2.2 The wall lies within the Yorkshire Dales Natural Park, and the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Barns and Walls Conservation Area, which was designated in March 1989. However, the wall is not specifically Listed as a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, nor is it recorded on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Historic Environment Record (YDNPA HER).
- 2.3 At the time of survey, the wall was generally in a reasonable condition, but with local collapses. The total length of wall surveyed was c.137m, extending from NGR SD 90009 98335 in the west to NGR SD 90123 98270 to the south; the wall followed a sinuous right-angled course and was set below the steep south-facing scarp along which the Pennine Way runs. For much of the length, the south or west face of the wall was much higher than the north or east face, standing over 2.50m high in several sections. This was largely due to the wall retaining the ground to the north, which was up to 1.50m higher than that to the south. The majority of the wall was built of limestone rubble. To the south of the wall, there was a flatter (but by no means level) area, up to 5m wide, beyond which the ground sloped evenly but steeply down towards the south. Within this flatter area, there were several dished depression or hollows, some of which appear to be artificial, together with a number of north-south aligned gullies and linear depressions. The surveyed wall is also shown on the 1st edition 1857 Ordnance Survey 6" map (sheet 51) (see figure 3).

#### 3 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The wall was visited on the 25th September 2013, and both sides of the alignment were inspected. A sketched plan was made at an approximate scale of 1:250, using measurements taken in the field and a 1:2500 scale map supplied by the YDNPA; all measurements were taken using traditional hand-held recording equipment. The resulting plan shows all significant detail such as openings (blocked or unblocked), joints etc, and was produced according to the guidelines established by English Heritage (2006, 8-10 & 19-21).
- 3.2 The drawn record was supplemented by a number of colour digital photographs with 10 megapixel resolution. English Heritage photographic guidelines were followed (English Heritage 2006, 10-12) and each photograph was provided with a scale

- where required. All photographs have been clearly numbered and labelled with the subject, orientation, date taken and photographer's name, and cross-referenced to digital files etc. Finally, sufficient notes were taken in the field to prepare a written description. No documentary research was required or undertaken as part of the survey work.
- 3.3 An EDAS archive survey report has been produced, based on the results of the information obtained during the field work. This report is illustrated with a reduced version of the survey plan and a selection of photographic plates. The small project archive arising from the archaeological survey, comprising drawn, written and photographic elements, has been ordered and indexed according to the standards set by English Heritage, and was deposited with the YDNPA at the end of the project (EDAS site code WSK 13).

#### 4 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING (see figure 4)

- 4.1 A detailed description of the wall is given below, based on the records made at the time of the September site visit. The wall is described in a logical sequence, commencing at the west end and moving east and south. Reference should also be made to the plan, and the photographic record which appears as Appendix 1; photographs are referenced in the following text in italic type and square brackets, the numbers before the stroke representing the film number and the number after indicating the frame e.g. [2/32]. Finally, in the following text, 'modern' is used to denote features or phasing dating to after c.1945.
- 4.2 The west end of the wall started adjacent to a gateway, beyond which was the eroded route of the Pennine Way [1/972]. At the point where it met the gateway [1/900], the wall had a slightly tapered profile, measuring 0.8m wide at the base and decreasing to 0.5m wide at the top. The south face stood up to 2.1m high. Here, the wall was built of roughly coursed and squared stone rubble, the rubble decreasing slightly in size from bottom to top (see plate 1). This part of the wall retained a small amount of slanted coping, but had no throughstones. A steep trackway, c.3.0m wide, descended from the gateway along the south side of the wall, itself carried on a retaining wall to the south side standing up to 1.0m in height; this retaining wall was 0.8m wide at the base and 0.4m wide at the top, and the 1857 Ordnance Survey 6" map shows that it originally continued as far as the south-west corner of the barn (see figure 3).
- 4.3 The main wall line continued as far as a well-preserved field barn [1/905, 1/906, 1/908, 1/971], which it butted (see plate 2). Just before the wall butted the barn, it contained a small recess near the base, measuring 0.4m wide by 0.5m high by 0.4m deep [1/903]; both lintel and sill were formed by single pieces of stone (see plate 3). The position of the recess, adjacent to the barn's only ground floor doorway, suggests that it may have been used to house a lamp or other pieces of equipment.
- 4.4 To the east of the barn, there was a gap some 3.5m wide where the wall had completely collapsed, its alignment marked by a steep south-facing slope containing a high proportion of rubble. Where the structure of the wall recommenced, it was of similar construction to before, but slightly less high, standing up to 2.0m high to the south face. Approximately 4.0m east of where it recommenced, the wall ran behind a very large ancient rowan tree [1/911-1/914], measuring a maximum of 2.0m in diameter (approximately east-west) (see plate 7). To the immediate north of the tree, the north face of the wall stood only 0.5m high, and had largely collapsed [1/968, 1/970]. To the east of the tree, where the wall resumed its full height, a low curving offshoot had been built off the south face to run around the front of the tree

- [1/916]. Immediately to the east of this, and partly continuous with it, a c.3.0m long, 1.0m high section of the south face's base was markedly battered [1/918]. It may have formed a buttress, added to the base of the wall here to prevent further collapse, or it may itself have been an earlier collapsed section which was subsequently used as a base for the wall above.
- 4.5 The wall then began to curve to the south-east [1/919, 1/920], gaining height as it did so, so that on reaching the point where it regained a more easterly direction [1/896], it stood up to 2.8m high, with vertical coping (see front cover). The point where the wall changed direction was marked by a large orthostat in the base, measuring 1.0m long by 0.75m high [1/921, 1/922]. By this point, the rubble used in the construction of the wall was less evenly sized and graduated than it was to the west of the barn, with patches of larger squared rubble amongst more thinly coursed material; it might be suggested that the lower 1.5m height of the wall here was an earlier phase which had subsequently been heightened or rebuilt. There were generally more orthostats to the base of the wall in this section, but they were intermittent, and none so large as that present at the change of direction.
- 4.6 A number of other features were visible to the east and west of this large orthostat. To the west, two stones placed on top of each other at the base of the wall [1/923] may have blocked a former opening, perhaps a rabbit hole, measuring 0.6m high and 0.3m wide (see plate 4). To the east of the orthostat, there may have been a similar, but slightly taller, blocked feature [1/924]. It is possible that, taken together, the two blocked openings might represent part of a helm-like structure, as has been recorded elsewhere within the Yorkshire Dales helms are open-sided lean-tos with a solid back wall and later field walls sometimes reveal the positions of the front supporting posts as tall narrow blocked gaps in the wall (Moorhouse 2003, 350-351; Moorhouse 2006, 58-60). However, the fact that the wall had a slightly curving alignment between the two blocked openings might preclude this, and there were no suggestive earthworks in the immediate vicinity.
- 4.7 The wall continued on an east-west alignment with a similar height and method of construction [1/925, 1/926, 1/929] (see plate 8). There were what appear to be several low, angled joints to the lower part of the south face, but it was difficult to tell if these were the result of older features or joints incorporated into the wall line, or simply repairs resulting from collapse. A shallow linear depression ran parallel to the north face [1/963, 1/966], most probably the remains of a ditch or drain. Further east, the wall began to drop in height, averaging 1.50m high [1/930-1/932].
- 4.8 After c.38m from the large orthostat described above, the wall angled sharply to the south-east, and there may once have been a small structure positioned here, against the inside face [1/933]. This structure may have measured c.5.0m long by c.2.0m wide, with the long axis running parallel to the wall line where it angled to the south-east. The main evidence for the structure was a straight joint in the south face marking the west end of the former north wall [1/934, 1/935] and a section of better coursed stone along the east wall [1/938]. There was also a slight earthwork platform in the angle of the wall. When viewed from the other side of the wall, the joint in the north wall appeared to represent one side of a former, now blocked, narrow gateway c.1.2m wide [1/964, 1/965] (see plate 12). The sharp change of alignment of the wall at this point may therefore reflect the presence of a former opening, perhaps associated with a structure built on the inside face of the wall.
- 4.9 Moving south-east, some 10.5m to the south-east of the change of angle, there was a 3.0m long section of partially buried wall line at the base of the west face of the wall projecting up to 1.50m, forming a buttresses or representing an earlier line that

has since been rebuilt [1/936, 1/937]. Beyond this, the wall angled towards the south-east for c.15m, before again resuming a southern alignment [1/939, 1/941], running down the steep south-facing slope here [1/940] (see plate 9). There was another well-built angled projection at the base of the west face of the wall [1/942], before an inserted 3.14m wide gateway; to the north of the gateway, the wall measured 0.85m wide at the base, 0.70m wide at the top and stood a maximum of 2.0m in height, with vertical coping (see plate 6). On the east side of the wall, to the north of the gateway, there was a spread of small angular limestone rubble, covering an area 10.0m long by 1.2m wide, perhaps left over from a previous repair [1/960]. To the north of this, a shallow linear depression ran parallel to the east side of the wall [1/961].

- 4.10 The ends of the wall created by the inserted gateway had been squared off with well constructed and coursed stonework, in total contrast to the wall to either side [1/943, 1/944] (see plate 10); no evidence for any gate fittings was evident. A small dump of rubble lay on the west side of the opening, presumably taken from the wall to create the opening. The c.2m wide track passing through the gateway was carried on a low retaining wall on its south side [1/945], which crossed a number of earlier northwest/south-east aligned linear depressions which appeared to be of natural origin.
- 4.11 On the south side of the gateway, the wall stood to a similar height as that to the north, but it was more tapered in section, being only 0.5m wide across the top [1/959]. As the wall ran south down the slope, it decreased in height to an average of 1.60m, and for much of this section it had a wider shallow linear depression running parallel to the east side [1/956, 1/958]. After passing a small beech tree, the wall had a large orthostat at the base [1/947, 1/948] (see plate 11), and to the south. after a hawthorn, there were further large orthostats in the west face, two of which framed a blocked opening in the base of the wall [1/949, 1/950]. This opening had a flat stone lintel and resembled a sheep creep or cripple hole, 0.5m wide and 0.8m high [1/952, 1/953]; the wall above the lintel also contained two joints, suggesting that the creep had been inserted into the wall rather than being part of the original construction (see plate 5). Beyond a second hawthorn, the wall began to deteriorate in condition [1/954] and it decayed completely within 1.0m of the drystone wall defining the southern limit of the field [1/955]; as a result, it was not possible to determine the relationship between this and the adjacent right-angled field wall. At the point where the surveyed wall ran out, it measured 0.9m wide across the base, 0.5m wide across the top, and stood 1.5m high.

#### 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 The section of surveyed wall displays a typical range of features and characteristics (differential construction, blocked openings, a probable sheep creep, minor realignments, gateways etc) that would be expected in a boundary forming part of a complex historic and archaeological landscape that has developed over a considerable period of time. A comparison between the historic 1857 and current Ordnance Survey maps (see figures 2 and 3), as well as wider sections or buttresses at the base of parts of the wall, shows that the boundary has experienced some minor variation in alignment, probably as a result of rebuilding, particularly the east-west section which retains the ground to the north. The different sizes of stones used in the wall, with much smaller stones at the top compared to those at the base, provides evidence for continued rebuilding and maintenance. The gateway towards the centre of the east side has clearly been inserted, and new well-constructed robust 'wall-ends' have been created. A sheep creep to the south of this gateway may also have been inserted.

- 5.2 The pasture field which is defined by the surveyed section of wall is named as 'Doctor Wood' on the historic and current maps, and it, together with another field to the south, presumably represents a cleared area of former woodland or wood pasture, the remains of which still lie to the west. The field barn located in the northwest corner of the field would have provided shelter for stock and storage for hay, and was in place by 1854 when the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map was surveyed; it is associated with a recess built into the adjacent wall. A study of other field barns within the Swaledale and Arkengarthdale area suggests they were built in conjunction with the gradual enclosure of the open fields and areas of wood pasture in the 16th and 17th centuries (White & Darlington 2004, 147-148), although the Doctor Wood barn is more likely to be late 18th-early 19th century in date. The overall character of the wall, with the absence of 'throughstones', an inconsistent build and a meandering rather than straight alignment, would suggest construction in the 18th century or even earlier (Dennison 2004, 33-35). However, without any detailed documentary research, it is not possible to provide any further comment on the development or place of the boundary within the wider local landscape.
- 5.3 The survey has shown that a number of sections of the wall have either collapsed, or are in danger of collapse, particularly around the large rowan tree to the east of the field barn. The wall is in need of some limited repair and maintenance, which would simply be a continuation of a long history of such action. Wherever possible, any future repairs should ensure that the general character and appearance of the wall is maintained, and that any identified wall furniture, such as blocked or extant openings, the recess next to the barn, joints etc, is not altered or removed by this work.

#### **6 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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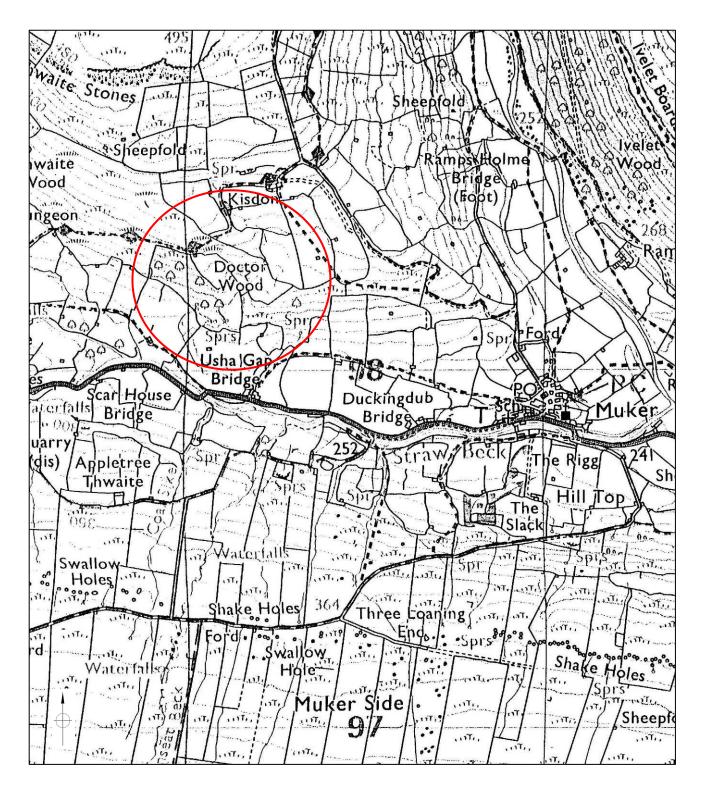
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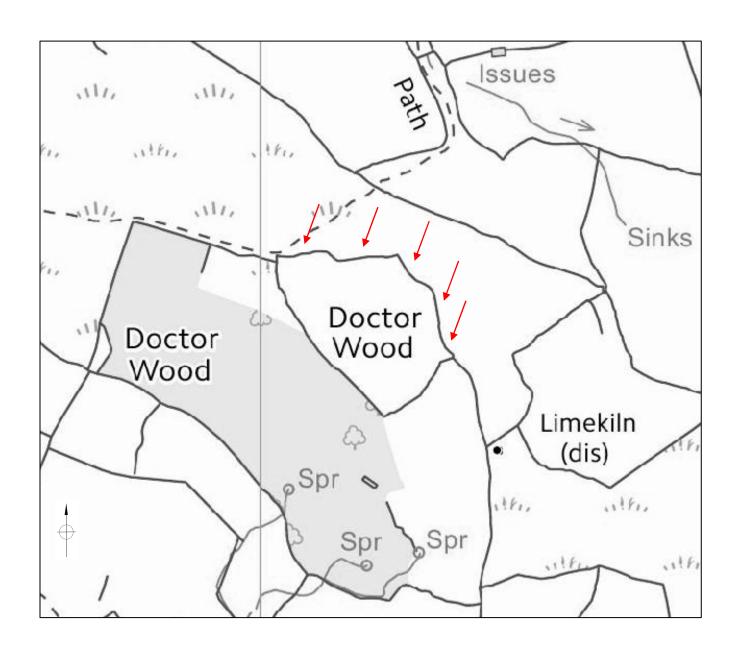
#### 7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

7.1 The walling survey at Doctor Wood was commissioned by M M & C L Whitehead, and EDAS would like to thank Christine Clarkson for her help and co-operation when carrying out the archaeological recording. The on-site recording was undertaken by Shaun Richardson, and he also produced the fieldwork records and a draft report. The final report was produced by Ed Dennison, with whom the responsibility for any errors remains.



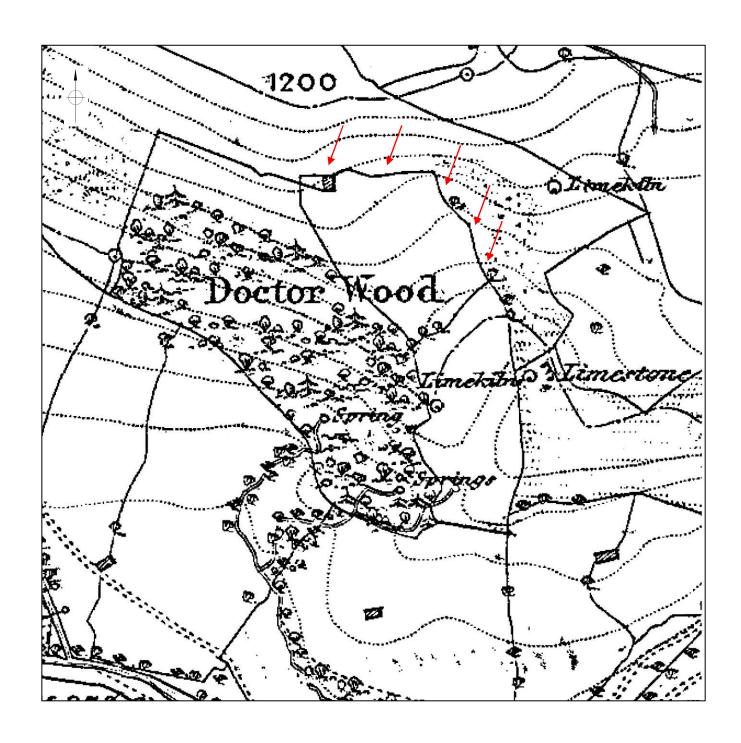
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WALL AT DOCTO	WALL AT DOCTOR WOOD, KISDON					
GENERAL LOCATION						
SCALE NTS	NOV 2013					
EDAS	FIGURE 1					



Plan provided by YDNPA.

WALL AT DOCTOR WOOD, KISDON						
TITLE						
DETAILED LOCATION						
SCALE	DATE					
NTS	NOV 2013					
	FIGURE					
EDAS	2					
	_					



Source: 1857 Ordnance Survey 6" to 1 mile maps sheet 51 (surveyed 1854).

WALL AT DOCTO	WALL AT DOCTOR WOOD, KISDON					
ORDNANCE SURVEY 1857 MAP						
AS SHOWN	NOV 2013					
EDAS	FIGURE 3					

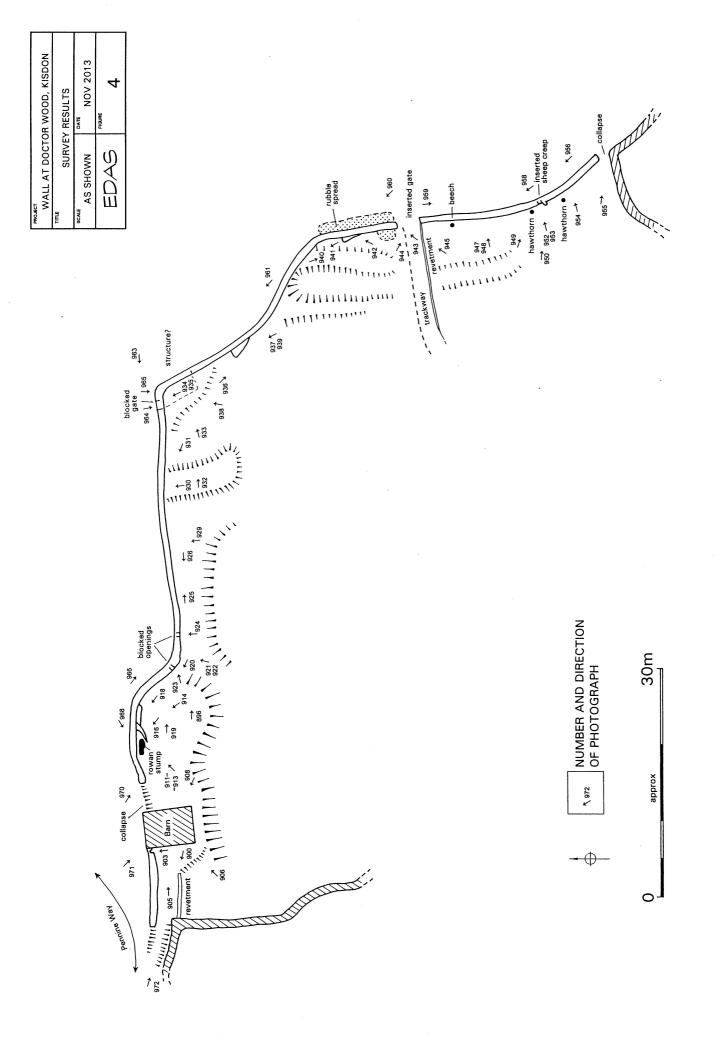




Plate 1: Revetted track at west end of wall, looking NW (photo 1/900).



Plate 2: Field barn, looking NE (photo 1/906).



Plate 3: Recess in south face of wall west of barn, looking N (photo 1/903).



Plate 4: Possible blocked feature in south face of wall west of corner orthostat, looking NE (photo 1/923).



Plate 5: Blocked opening in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E (photo 1/953).



Plate 6: East face of wall to north of east gateway, looking NW (photo 1/960).



Plate 7: Rowan tree to south face of wall, east of barn, looking NW (photo 1/914).



Plate 8: South face of east-west section of wall, looking W (photo 1/926).



Plate 9: West face of wall towards east gateway, looking SE (photo 1/940).



Plate 10: Revetted trackway through east gateway, looking N (photo 1/945).



Plate 11: Orthostat in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E (photo 1/947).



Plate 12: Blocked opening in north face of wall at change of angle, looking S (photo 1/964).

## **APPENDIX 1**

# SECTION OF WALL AT DOCTOR WOOD, SOUTH-WEST OF KISDON, MUKER, NORTH YORKSHIRE: PHOTOGRAPHIC CATALOGUE

Film 1: Colour digital photographs taken 25th September 2013

Film	Frame	Subject	Scale
1	896	General view of wall, looking E	-
1	900	Revetted track at west end of wall, looking NW	1m
1	903	Recess in south wall face, west of barn, looking N	1m
1	905	Barn, west elevation, looking E	1m
1	906	Barn, looking NE	1m
1	908	Barn, east elevation, looking NW	1m
1	911	Rowan tree to south face of wall, looking N	1m
1	912	Rowan tree to south face of wall, looking NE	1m
1	913	Rowan tree to south face of wall, looking N	1m
1	914	Rowan tree to south face of wall, looking NW	1m
<u>1</u> 1	916	Extension around rowan tree in south face of wall, looking NW  Buttress in south face, east of rowan tree, looking NW	1m
1	918 919	Angle of wall to the SE, south face, looking E	1m 1m
1	920	Angle of wall to the SE, south face, looking L	1m
1	921	Orthostat in south face at angle of wall, looking N	1m
1	922	Orthostat in south face at angle of wall, looking N	1m
1	923	Possible blocked feature in south face to west of orthostat, looking NE	1m
1	924	Possible blocked feature in south face to east of orthostat, looking N	1m
1	925	South face of east-west section of wall, looking E	1m
1	926	South face of east-west section of wall, looking W	1m
1	929	South face of east-west section of wall, looking N	1m
1	930	South face of east-west section of wall, looking N	1m
1	931	South face of east-west section of wall, looking NW	1m
1	932	South face of east-west section of wall, looking NE	1m
	933	Possible structure at change of angle to SE, looking E	1m
1	934	North wall of possible structure at change of angle to SE, looking N	1m
1	935 936	North wall of possible structure at change of angle to SE, looking N	1m 1m
1	937	Buttress at SE angle of wall, looking SE  Buttress at SE angle of wall, looking NW	1m
<del>'</del>	938	East wall of possible structure at change of angle to SE, looking NW	1m
<del>:</del> 1	939	Buttress at SE angle of wall, looking NW	1m
1	940	View of west face of wall towards east gateway, looking SE	1m
1	941	West face of SE angle of wall, looking NW	1m
1	942	Buttress in west face to north of east gateway, looking NW	1m
1	943	North side of east gateway, looking N	1m
1	944	South side of east gateway, looking SE	1m
1	945	Trackway through east gateway, looking N	1m
	947	Orthostat in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E	1m
1	948	Orthostat in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E	1m
1	949 950	West face of wall, south of east gateway, looking SE	1m 1m
1	950	West face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E  Blocked opening in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E	1m
1	952	Blocked opening in west face of wall, south of east gateway, looking E	1m
1	954	West face of south end of wall, looking NE	1m
1	955	West face of south end of wall, looking E	1m
1	956	Linear depression on east side of wall near south end, looking N	1m
1	958	Linear depression on east side of wall near south end, looking N	1m
1	959	East face of wall to south of east gateway, looking S	1m
1	960	East face of wall to north of east gateway, looking NW	1m
11	961	Linear depression to east face of wall, south of SE angle, looking N	1m
1	963	North face of east-west section of wall, looking W	1m
1	964	Blocked opening in north face of wall at change of angle, looking S	1m
	965	North face of wall at change of angle, looking S	1m
1	966	General view of wall, looking SE	- 1 m
<u>1</u> 1	968 970	North face of wall at rowan tree, looking W  North face of wall at rowan tree, looking SE	1m
<u> </u>	970	Barn, north gable, looking SE	- 1m
1	971	Pennine Way at west end of wall, looking SE	-
1	312	1 Chillie Way at West end of Wall, looking OL	_









